

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Amendment:

Claims 1-23 are canceled. Claims 24-42 are added. New claim 24 is a rewritten version of original claim 22 in independent form including intervening original claims 1 and 15. New claims 25-42 find support in original claims 2-14 and 17-21 respectively. New claims 25-42 are all directly or indirectly dependent from new claim 24 which is equivalent to original claim 22. No new matter has been entered.

Restriction Requirement:

The claims have been divided into Groups as follows:

- Group I: Claims 1-21, drawn to an immunocompetent cell activation inhibitor comprising an antibody to osteopontin or peptide fragment thereof.
- Group II: Claim 22, drawn to a method for treatment of diseases caused by activation of immunocompetent cells, characterized in administering the therapeutic agent comprising an antibody to osteopontin or peptide fragment thereof.
- Group III: Claims 23, drawn to a method for treatment of hepatopathy, characterized in administering the therapeutic agent for hepatopathy comprising an antibody to osteopontin or peptide fragment thereof.

Applicants elect, without traverse, Group II, Claim 22 (now claims 24-42) (drawn to a method for treatment of diseases caused by activation of immunocompetent cells, characterized in administering the therapeutic agent comprising an antibody to osteopontin or peptide fragment thereof), for examination.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above-identified application is now in condition for examination on the merits, and early notice thereof is earnestly solicited.

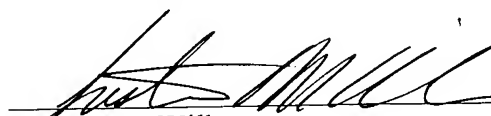
Respectfully Submitted,

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